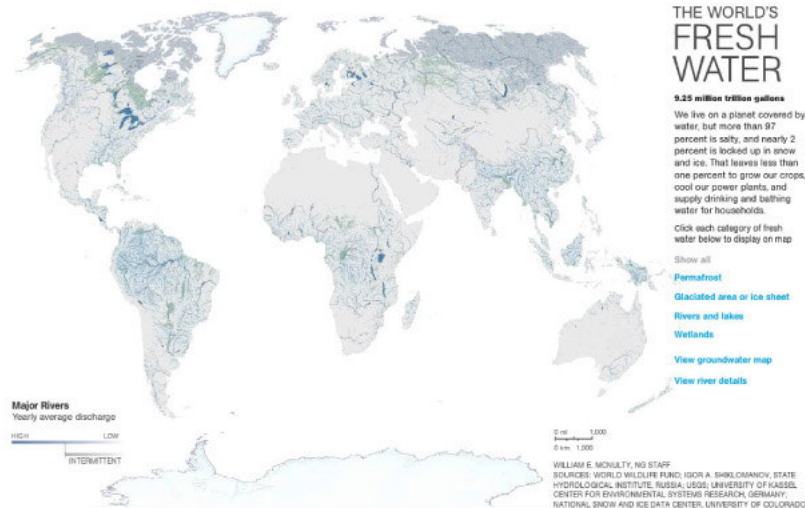


## Information Graphics

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Taschen's [Information Graphics](#) book is the most comprehensive I have seen concerned with modern (and historic) data visualisation. The book itself is worthy of its own infographic as it weighs about 5kg and spans nearly 500 pages to include "200 projects and over 400 examples of contemporary information graphics from all over the world—ranging from journalism to art, government, education, business and much more". Maps feature heavily in the book with examples from the [New York Times Graphics Department's](#) coverage of presidential elections, [Axis Map's](#) brilliant [typographic maps](#) of Chicago and Boston, [Eric Fischer's Flickr maps](#), and National Geographic's award winning [World of Rivers](#) (below). The production quality (as you would expect from Taschen) is very high and there is not a pixelated image in sight. I found the book extremely interactive with many fold-out pages to explore and colour coding according to theme (Location, Time, Category, Hierarchy). With most of us consuming graphics largely on-screen it is nice to see them compiled in printed form.



My biggest concern about some previous books on infographics (and much of what is available online) relates to their uncritical promotion as brilliant ways of displaying factual information based on complex data. I was therefore pleased to see that in her introduction, Sandra Rendgen, stresses the problems with "Suspicious Data" stating that:

*"...general popularisation (of infographics) brings with it a level of denigration, and content-related weaknesses are frequently found in graphic representations".*

After reading this I was reassured that there was a strong editorial policy in terms of the graphics selected and their associated commentary. This shows and, despite the many pages to be filled, that vast majority of what is featured can be held up as best practice. The essays and associated images at the beginning offer good historical context (data visualisation is nothing new) and the location section alone would make for a good book for cartographers (sad not to see an Swiss mountain maps in there though). I also found the Category section (especially the work of Stefanie Posavec, below) particularly interesting by showcasing a range of examples of visualising more qualitative data.

Everyone who comes by my office has opened the book at least once and been tempted to buy it. For [£29 on Amazon](#) (RRP £44) I think you would be mad not to. For those producing data visualisations the book provides some great inspiration for future projects, whilst those who simply enjoy looking at them will not be disappointed.

